

No.  
216

# Commando

WAR STORIES IN PICTURES

1/-



**INTERNATIONAL**  
**SQUADRON**

# SUMMER STARS



**SEEN** here in the unusual role of wicket keeper in a charity match at Brisbane, **Wesley Hall**, the world's fastest bowler, makes even the toughest batsman quake when he pounds up to the crease to hurl a ball down the wicket at almost 100 m.p.h.

Wesley was first picked to play for the West Indies when he was only nineteen. He had played only one first class cricket match before in his life, and that was the Test trial!

Tremendously strong as well as fast, Wesley once bowled non-stop for almost four hours against England at Lords in 1963, taking 4 for 93. But he had hit the headlines before this, in 1960 at Brisbane, when he took nine wickets against Australia in a tied match which critics claim to be the greatest Test ever played.

Usually very unreliable as a batsman, Wes occasionally produces devastating form. Against Cambridge University in 1963, for instance, he scored a brilliant 102 in 65 minutes for the season's quickest century. Great hitting for a bowler.

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**Another Summer Star—DAVID BROWN—Commando No. 215, on sale now!**

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THE LIGHT FLASHED REGULARLY, PAUSED, THEN RECOMMENCED ITS BLINKING. GRAY STRAINED HIS EYES AROUND, BUT COULD SEE NO ANSWERING LIGHT. THEN HE CAUGHT A FLICKER OF MOVEMENT ON THE HILL OVERLOOKING THE BAY...



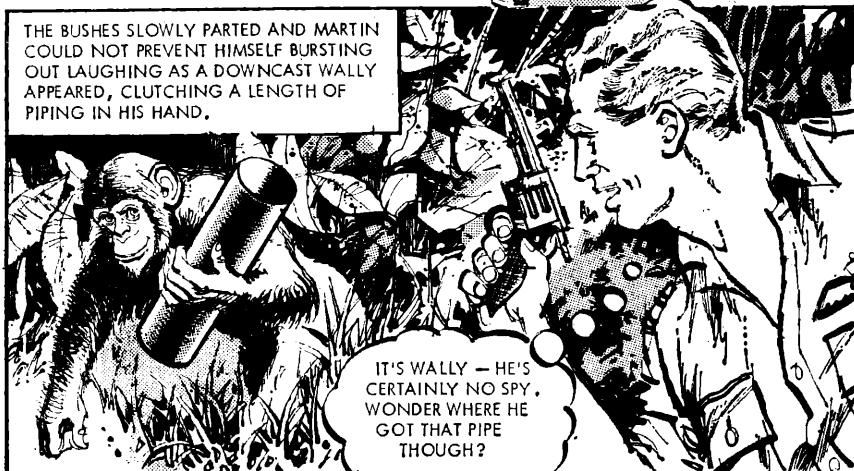
SOMEBODY UP THERE. HE MUST BE SIGNALLING A SHIP, BUT HOW? I DON'T SEE ANY LIGHT.

PAUSING ONLY TO DRAW HIS REVOLVER GRAY SPRINTED UP THE HILL. THERE WAS NO SIGN OF LIFE, BUT THEN A BUSH QUIVERED...



ALL RIGHT, COME OUT OF THERE WITH YOUR HANDS UP!

THE BUSHES SLOWLY PARTED AND MARTIN COULD NOT PREVENT HIMSELF BURSTING OUT LAUGHING AS A DOWNCAST WALLY APPEARED, CLUTCHING A LENGTH OF PIPING IN HIS HAND.



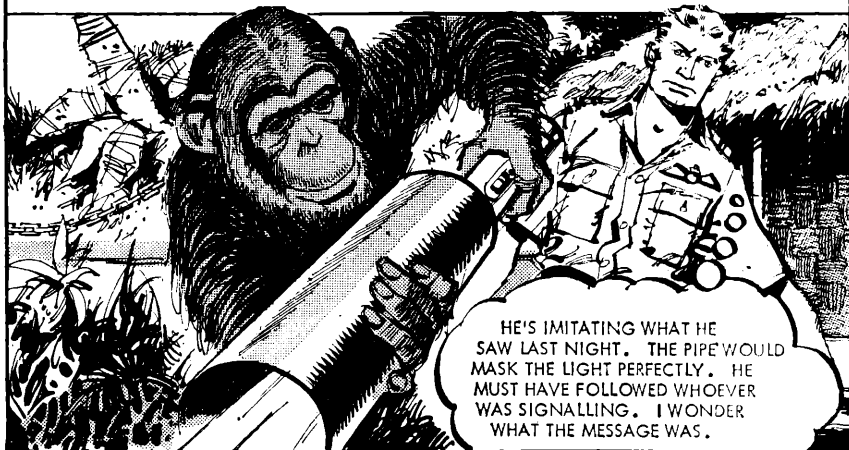
IT'S WALLY — HE'S CERTAINLY NO SPY. WONDER WHERE HE GOT THAT PIPE THOUGH?

STILL BEWILDERED, MARTIN WATCHED THE CHIMP SCUTTLE BACK TO THE CAMP.

THE ANSWER CAME NEXT MORNING. FOR HIS OWN SAFETY THE APE WAS KEPT CHAINED UP DURING THE DAY, BUT TOOK A LIVELY INTEREST IN WHAT WAS GOING ON. AS A MECHANIC PASSED HIS HUT, WALLY SUDDENLY BECAME VERY EXCITED.

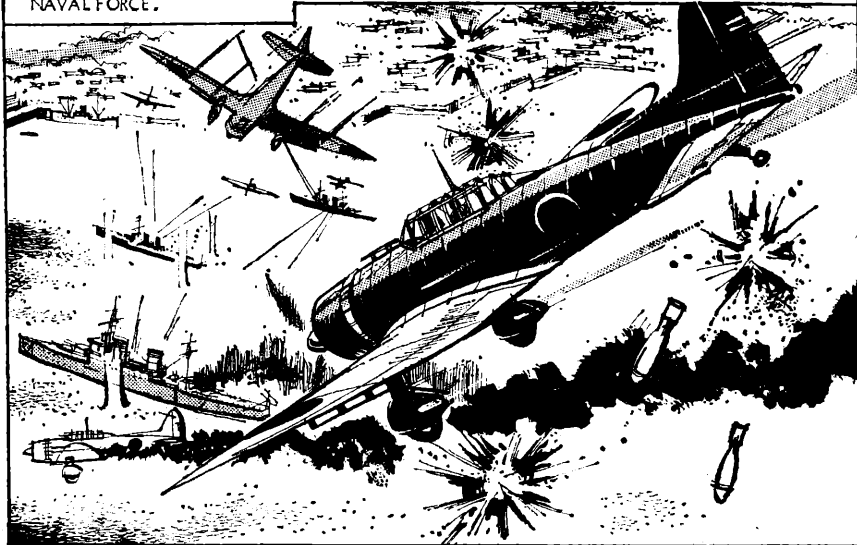


THE CHIMP GRABBED THE TORCH, INSERTED IT INTO ONE END OF THE PIPE, POINTED THE OTHER END OUT TO SEA, AND BEGAN FLASHING THE LAMP, HOOTING WITH DELIGHT.

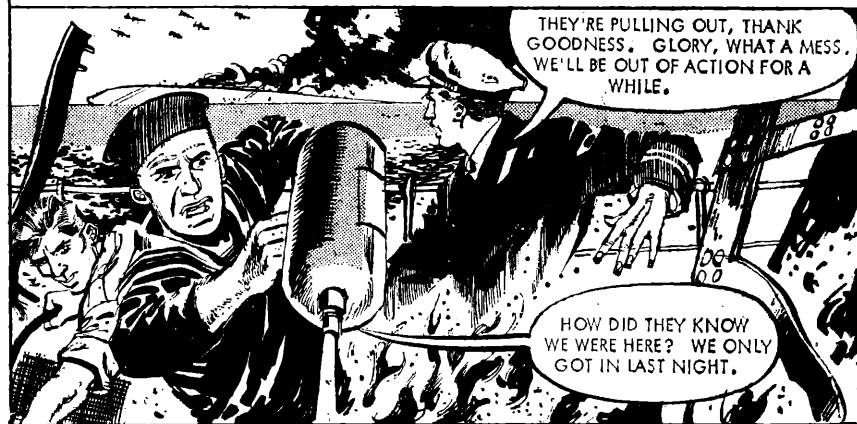




EVEN AS THESE THOUGHTS RACED THROUGH MARTIN'S MIND, JAPANESE DIVE BOMBERS WERE SWOOPING ON FREETOWN HARBOUR. THEIR TARGET WAS THE NEWLY ARRIVED NAVAL FORCE.



IGNORING THE STORM OF ANTI-AIRCRAFT FIRE, THE JAP PILOTS PRESSED HOME THEIR ATTACK WITH TYPICAL FANATICISM. ARMOUR-PIERCING BOMBS TORE THE VITALS OUT OF ONE DESTROYER, SINKING HER, AND SEVERELY DAMAGED THE CRUISER.



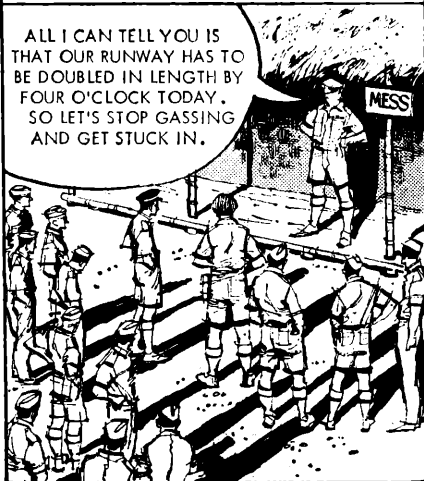
THAT QUESTION WAS BEING ASKED IN THE HIGHEST QUARTERS. EFFORTS TO SEEK OUT AND DESTROY THE JAPANESE SHIPS WERE STEPPED UP, AND SECURITY MEASURES TIGHTENED.

WELL WELL, THINGS ARE REALLY MOVING. DEADLINE FOUR O'CLOCK. THE BLOKES WON'T HALF MOAN ABOUT NOT BEING TOLD WHAT ALL THE FUSS IS ABOUT. STILL, ORDERS ARE ORDERS.



LAANDER CALLED HIS MEN TOGETHER, AND TOLD WHAT WAS REQUIRED OF THEM. AS HE EXPECTED, HE WAS BOMBARDED WITH QUESTIONS.

ALL I CAN TELL YOU IS THAT OUR RUNWAY HAS TO BE DOUBLED IN LENGTH BY FOUR O'CLOCK TODAY. SO LET'S STOP GASSING AND GET STUCK IN.



TO COMPLETE THE WORK ON TIME, EVERY AVAILABLE MAN WAS ROPED IN. THERE WERE OBJECTIONS.

I MUST PROTEST SIR, TO ASK OFFICERS TO PERFORM MANUAL LABOUR...



I AM NOT ASKING, I'M ORDERING! I SAID EVERYBODY, I MEAN EVERYBODY, ME INCLUDED. NOW TAKE THIS SHOVEL AND GET CRACKING.

THE BRAVNY SQUADRON LEADER SET THE PACE, HIS POWERFUL MUSCLES RIPPLING AS HE SWUNG THE AXE. AT HIS EXAMPLE, EVERYONE SET TO WITH A WILL. EVEN SO, IT WAS AFTER FOUR WHEN LAANDER PRONOUNCED HIMSELF SATISFIED.

NOTHING LIKE A BIT OF EXERCISE TO KEEP YOU FIT. HULLO, THAT SOUNDS LIKE OUR NEW RECRUITS.

BEAUFORTS — SO THAT'S WHY WE HAD TO LENGTHEN THE RUNWAY.

THE THREE SQUAT TORPEDO BOMBERS SWEEPED IN TO LAND. HERE AT LAST WERE AIRCRAFT THAT COULD DEAL A CRIPPLING BLOW TO THE BIGGEST WARSHIP. THEY HAD COME BY AN INLAND ROUTE TO AVOID POSSIBLE DETECTION BY PATROLLING JAPANESE PLANES.

NICE BIT OF RUNWAY YOU CHAPS TURNED OUT AT SHORT NOTICE.

THANKS, BUT WE'RE NOT FINISHED YET. WE'LL BUILD SHELTER FROM THE TREES WE CHOPPED DOWN, TO CAMOUFLAGE YOUR MACHINES. YOU MIGHT AS WELL HELP.

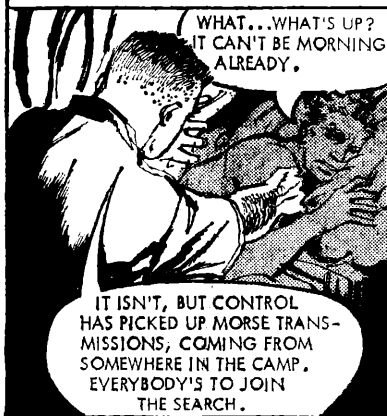
BEFORE THE ASTONISHED NEW ARRIVALS COULD SAY A WORD, AXES AND SAWS WERE THRUST INTO THEIR HANDS. BY DUSK THE BEAUFORTS WERE SECURE FROM AERIAL OBSERVATION, AND LAANDER DISMISSED HIS WEARY MEN.



YOU CAN GET SOME CHOW, NOW. HOW ARE YOU GOING TO OPERATE?

TWO AIRCRAFT WILL SUPPLEMENT YOUR CATALINA PATROLS. THE THIRD WILL STAND BY TO TAKE OFF IMMEDIATELY ANYTHING SUSPICIOUS IS SIGHTED.

THAT NIGHT, BONE WEARY MEN FLOPPED INTO BED EXHAUSTED. BUT THEY WERE NOT TO REST FOR LONG.



WHAT...WHAT'S UP?  
IT CAN'T BE MORNING  
ALREADY.

IT ISN'T, BUT CONTROL HAS PICKED UP MORSE TRANSMISSIONS, COMING FROM SOMEWHERE IN THE CAMP. EVERYBODY'S TO JOIN THE SEARCH.

THE CAMP WAS IN A TURMOIL. MEN RANSACKED EVERY BUILDING, SCoured THE SURROUNDING JUNGLE. THEY FOUND NOTHING.



STILL COMING IN, YOU SAY? CAN YOU MAKE ANYTHING OF IT?

NO SIR, BUT IT COULD BE SOME SORT OF CODE.



HOUNDED BY THE FIGHTING MAD LAANDER, THE SEARCH WAS REDOUBLED. MARTIN AND ROPER PAUSED FOR BREATH BY THE JETTY. A CATALINA WAS TIED UP THERE, UNDERGOING ENGINE REPAIRS.

I'VE RUN OUT OF PLACES TO LOOK. WAIT A MINUTE, THESE FLYING BOATS HAVE MORSE TRANSMITTERS!

CRUMBS, SO THEY DO. COME ON!

STEALTHILY THEY CLAMBERED ABOARD. SURE ENOUGH, A DIM FIGURE WAS CROUCHED IN THE CATALINA'S RADIO COMPARTMENT. THE BEAM OF GRAY'S TORCH STABBED OUT TO REVEAL —

WALLY, OH NO — NOT AGAIN!

WHAT A LAUGH. ALL THIS FUSS ABOUT CODE MESSAGES, AND IT WAS JUST THAT STUPID APE SHOWING OFF!

LAUGHINGLY THEY REPORTED BACK TO LAANDER AND TOLD HIM OF THE "MYSTERY" OPERATOR. BUT THE BIG SOUTH AFRICAN WAS NOT AMUSED.

...SO HE MUST HAVE SEEN SOMEBODY WORKING THE SET, AND COPIED THEM.

HE HAS FLOWN WITH US ONCE OR TWICE, AND MAY HAVE SEEN THAT. BUT HE COULDN'T SWITCH ON AND TUNE THE SET. ALSO THE HATCHES ON THAT AIRCRAFT WERE SECURED TO KEEP HIM OUT. SOMEBODY TOOK HIM IN THERE!

THIS INCIDENT, COMING SO CLOSE ON THE ARRIVAL OF THE BEAUFORTS, AND COUPLED WITH THE FREETOWN RAID, GOT LAANDER THINKING. DESPITE HIMSELF, HE FELT THERE MIGHT AFTER ALL BE SOMETHING IN GRAY'S SUSPICIONS OF A SPY ON THE BASE.

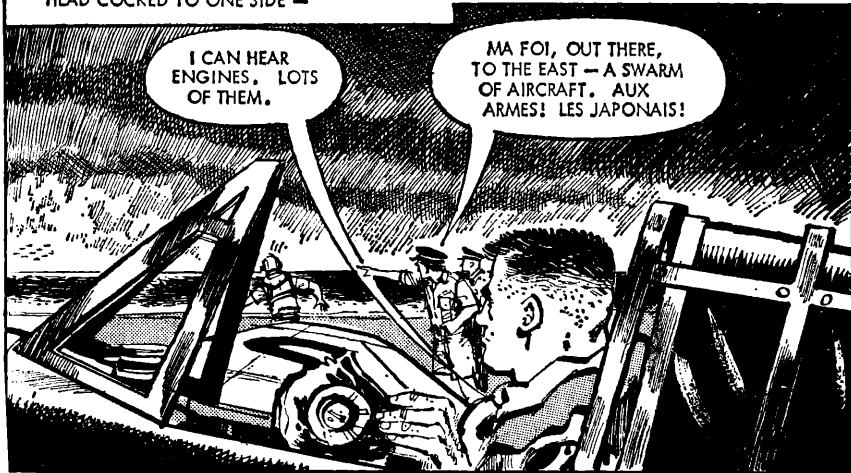
THIS MAY ALL BE SOMEBODY'S IDEA OF A JOKE, BUT I'M TAKING NO CHANCES. STANDING FIGHTER PATROLS WILL BE FLOWN FROM FIRST LIGHT TOMORROW. ALL FIGHTER PILOTS AT READINESS FROM THAT TIME.

I'LL TAKE FIRST STINT, SIR.

THE MEN DISPERSED, UNCONSCIOUSLY DRAWING INTO NATIONAL GROUPS, TALKING UNEASILY AMONGST THEMSELVES, EYEING EACH OTHER WITH DISTRUST AND SUSPICION.



IT WAS STILL DARK WHEN THE PILOTS CAME DOWN TO THE AIRFIELD NEXT MORNING. AT THE FIRST GLIMMER OF DAYLIGHT, ROPER CLIMBED INTO HIS COCKPIT, THEN FROZE, HEAD COCKED TO ONE SIDE —



THERE WAS A WILD SCRAMBLE TO THE AIRCRAFT. PROPS WHIRLED, ENGINES BELLOWED INTO LIFE. THE MOTLEY ASSORTMENT OF FIGHTER PLANES JOSTLED FOR POSITION ON THE RUNWAY.

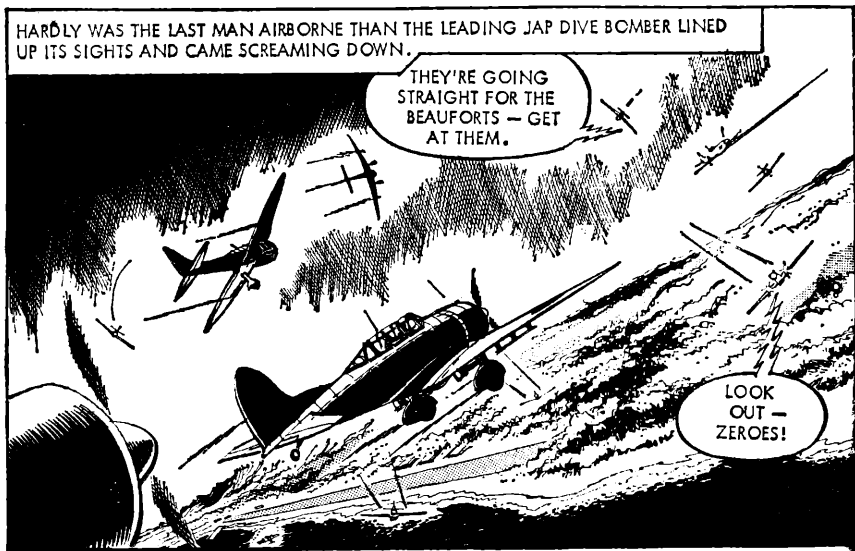
FOLLOW ME IN,  
CHAPS. PICK YOUR  
OWN TARGETS.



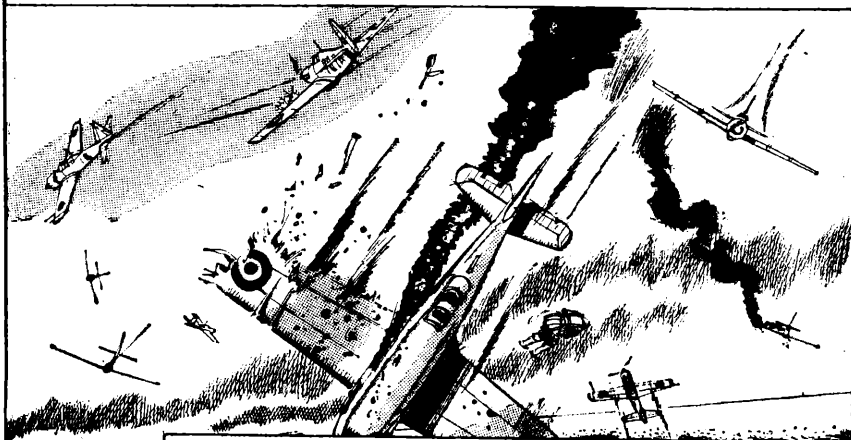
HARDLY WAS THE LAST MAN AIRBORNE THAN THE LEADING JAP DIVE BOMBER LINED UP ITS SIGHTS AND CAME SCREAMING DOWN.

THEY'RE GOING  
STRAIGHT FOR THE  
BEAUFORTS — GET  
AT THEM.

LOOK  
OUT —  
ZEROES!



THE TWO FORCES CLASHED IN A WHIRLING MELEE OF DARTING WEAVING AIRCRAFT AND BLAZING GUNS. THE ZERO PILOTS BROKE IN AMONGST ALLIED MACHINES, DRIVING THEM OUT TO SEA, LEAVING THE DIVE BOMBERS TO DO THEIR DEADLY WORK UNMOLESTED.



THE JAPS SOON HAD THE UPPER HAND. ONLY THE DEWOTINES COULD MATCH THE ZEROES FOR MANOEUVRABILITY, AND THEY LACKED SPEED AND CLIMB. THE BATTLE RAGED IN THE MORNING SKY.

DOWN BELOW, SQUADRON LEADER LAANDER GROUND HIS TEETH IN HELP-LESS RAGE AS THE AICHIS PLANTED THEIR BOMBS WITH MURDEROUS ACCURACY ON THE BEAUFORTS. THE LEAFY CAMOUFLAGE SPOILED THEIR AIM A LITTLE, BUT NOT ENOUGH.



MAGTIG, THAT'S TWO THEY'VE GOT. HOW THE DEVIL DID THEY KNOW JUST WHERE THOSE BEAUS WERE PARKED?

I RECKON WE'VE GOT A NIGGER IN OUR LITTLE WOOD-PILE, SIR. I'D GIVE HALF A YEAR'S PAY TO WRING HIS NECK.

AT LAST THE TUMULT DIED AWAY. THE SURVIVING FIGHTERS LIMPED IN TO LAND, ALL MUCH THE WORSE FOR WEAR. THE TORPEDO BOMBER FORCE HAD BEEN COMPLETELY WIPED OUT IN ONE SMASHING BLOW.



THIS POINT WAS QUICKLY PICKED ON BY THE FRENCH PILOTS, STILL SMARTING UNDER GRAY'S ACCUSATIONS. THE AIR OF SUSPICION PERVAIDING THE BASE HAD PUT NERVES ON EDGE.





THE FRENCHMAN SPAT CONTEMPTUOUSLY, MARTIN'S FACE TIGHTENED...



BEFORE THE TWO ENRAGED MEN COULD GRAPPLE, LAANDER'S MUSCULAR ARMS SENT BOTH SPINNING INTO THE DUST.



WHAT INDEED! FEAR, MISTRUST AND SUSPICION HUNG OVER THE LITTLE FLYING BOAT BASE LIKE A PALL. MORALE WAS AT ROCK BOTTOM. LAANDER SAT IN HIS OFFICE, THINKING HARD. THEN HIS BROW CLEARED AND HE SENT FOR HIS CHIEF MECHANIC.



COME IN SERGEANT, SIT DOWN. HOW'S THE WORK GOING ON THE CATALINA THAT WAS DAMAGED IN THE SHELLING?

NEARLY FINISHED, SIR. WE'RE WAITING FOR A NEW GUN BLISTER, THEN SHE'LL BE READY.

LAANDER RUBBED HIS CHIN THOUGHTFULLY. A PLAN WAS FORMING. WITH LUCK HE COULD PULL IT OFF.

I BELIEVE THE CATALINA CAN BE MODIFIED TO CARRY TORPEDOES. AM I RIGHT?



WHY YES, SIR. THE PICK UP POINTS FOR THE SHACKLES ARE BUILT INTO THE WING AND THE RELEASE MECHANISM IS ALL THERE. BUT WHY...

HEAR ME OUT. I WANT TO SALVAGE THE TORPEDO SHACKLES FROM THE WRECKED BEAUFORTS RIGHT AWAY. FIT THEM TO THE CAT. NOT A WORD TO ANYONE.



ALL RIGHT, SIR. JUST AS YOU SAY.

THE PERPLEXED SERGEANT LEFT, MUTTERING ABOUT THE WAY HEAT COULD SEND A MAN DOTTY. LAANDER THEN SENT FOR 1 LIGHT LIEUTENANT PANNEK.



THEN PANNEK CAUGHT THE LOOK IN THE BIG SQUADRON LEADER'S EYES, AND SAT BACK IN HIS CHAIR. THESE TWO HAD BEEN FRIENDS A LONG TIME.



PANNEK RESTRAINED HIS CURIOSITY WITH AN EFFORT.

ALL RIGHT, SIR. MAY I TELL MY CREW ABOUT THIS?



JUST THAT YOU'RE BEING RESTED. I'M SORRY, SON, BUT I CAN ONLY TRUST A HANDFUL OF MEN. PLAY ALONG AND WITH LUCK WE'LL CLEAR THE AIR ONCE AND FOR ALL.

IN THE DAYS THAT FOLLOWED, THE TENSION IN THE BASE DIDN'T SLACKEN. EVERYONE WAS KEYED UP, WAITING FOR SOMETHING — NOBODY KNEW WHAT — TO BREAK.



WHERE ARE THEY OFF TO? WHAT'S THAT IN THE BOAT?

SEARCH ME. THEY'VE BEEN POKING ABOUT ROUND WHAT'S LEFT OF THE BEAUFORTS ALL DAY.

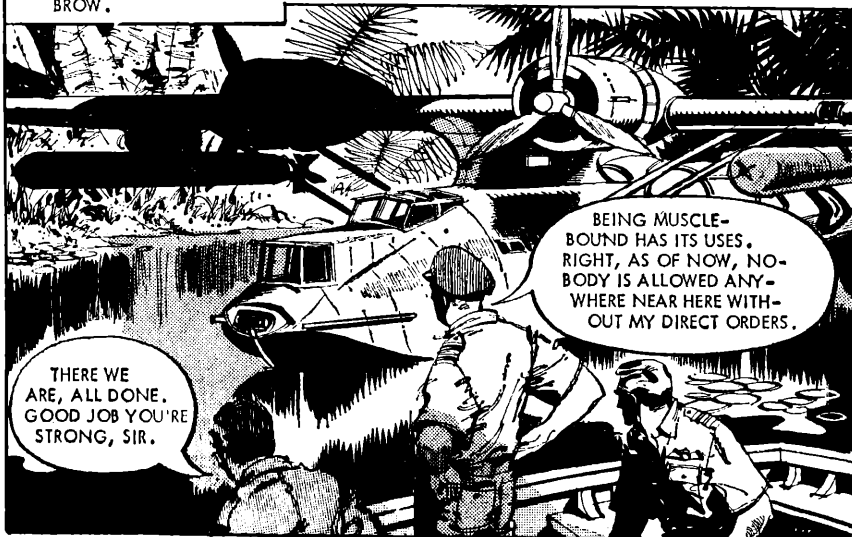
THE SERGEANT MECHANIC FINALLY ANNOUNCED THAT THE CONVERSION OF THE CATALINA WAS COMPLETE. THAT NIGHT THREE STEALTHY FIGURES TRUNDLED THE TWO TORPEDOES SALVAGED FROM THE BEAUFORTS DOWN TO THE JETTY, AND FERRIED THEM OVER ONE AT A TIME.



IT'S GOING TO BE HARD WORK FOR US TO HOIST THESE INTO POSITION IN THE DARK, EVEN USING THE CAT'S HAND-WINCHES.

I KNOW, BUT IT MUST BE DONE NOW. I ONLY HOPE OUR RESIDENT SPY, IF THERE IS ONE — IS SAFELY TUCKED UP IN BED.

THE STARS GAVE A FEEBLE LIGHT, HELPED OUT BY THE SHIELDED TORCHES OF THE THREE MEN. AFTER THREE HOURS BACK-BREAKING WORK, LAANDER PAUSED AND MOPPED HIS BROW.



THERE WE ARE, ALL DONE. GOOD JOB YOU'RE STRONG, SIR.

BEING MUSCLE-BOUND HAS ITS USES. RIGHT, AS OF NOW, NOBODY IS ALLOWED ANYWHERE NEAR HERE WITHOUT MY DIRECT ORDERS.

NEXT DAY THREE TOMAHAWKS WERE FERRIED IN TO BRING LAANDER'S FIGHTER FLIGHT UP TO STRENGTH.



NO SIGN OF ANY REPLACEMENT HURRICANES FOR US. HOW'S THE GREAT SPY INVESTIGATION GOING?

DON'T JOKE, FRANK, IT'S SERIOUS. IT'S BEEN QUIET SINCE THE AIR RAID, BUT LAST NIGHT I THOUGHT I HEARD THAT LIEUTENANT PANNEK COME IN TO HIS ROOM ABOUT TWO A.M. WONDER WHERE HE'D BEEN?

LAANDER SEEMED IN EXCELLENT SPIRITS AT LUNCH, TALKING CHEERILY TO HIS AIRCREWS, TRYING TO INJECT A LITTLE HUMOUR INTO THE OVER-GLOOMY ATMOSPHERE.

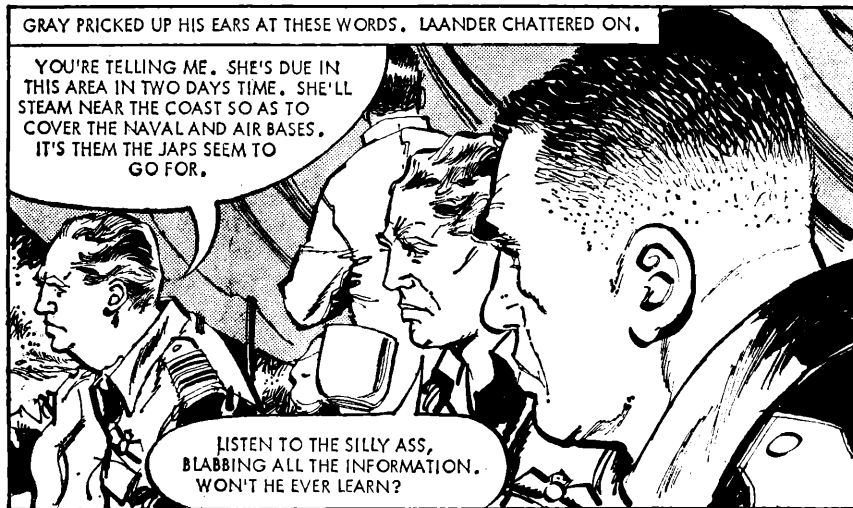
THINGS ARE REALLY HUMMING NOW. THOSE JAPS WON'T BE ON THE LOOSE MUCH LONGER. AN AIRCRAFT CARRIER IS COMING SOUTH TO JOIN THE HUNT.



A CARRIER?  
NOW THAT'S WHAT WAS  
WANTED ALL ALONG.

GRAY PRICKED UP HIS EARS AT THESE WORDS. LAANDER CHATTERED ON.

YOU'RE TELLING ME. SHE'S DUE IN THIS AREA IN TWO DAYS TIME. SHE'LL STEAM NEAR THE COAST SO AS TO COVER THE NAVAL AND AIR BASES. IT'S THEM THE JAPS SEEM TO GO FOR.



LISTEN TO THE SILLY ASS,  
BLABBING ALL THE INFORMATION.  
WON'T HE EVER LEARN?





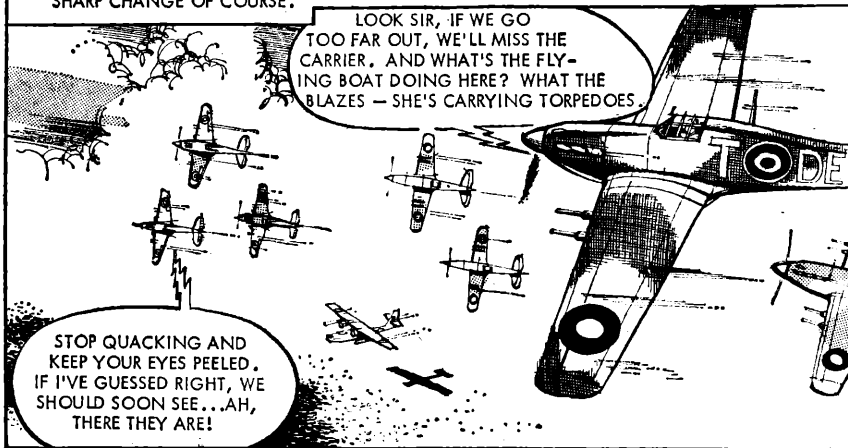
SOON AFTER DAWN ON THE APPOINTED DAY THE EIGHT ASSORTED FIGHTER PLANES TOOK THE AIR, WATCHED BY A MYSTIFIED SERGEANT MECHANIC AND THE FRENCH PILOT WHO HAD LOST HIS MACHINE IN THE AIR RAID.



THE FLYING BOAT, SHE CARRIES TORPEDOES! I DO NOT THINK YOUR OFFICER HAS BEEN QUITE HONEST WITH US. WHAT IS HE PLANNING?

DUNNO! I'M AS MUCH IN THE DARK AS YOU, MATE.

LAANDER LED HIS FORMATION WELL OUT TO SEA, KEEPING VERY LOW. GRAY FIDGETED IN HIS SEAT WITH ANNOYANCE. WHAT WAS GOING ON? THEN LAANDER ORDERED A SHARP CHANGE OF COURSE.



LOOK SIR, IF WE GO TOO FAR OUT, WE'LL MISS THE CARRIER. AND WHAT'S THE FLYING BOAT DOING HERE? WHAT THE BLAZES — SHE'S CARRYING TORPEDOES.

STOP QUACKING AND KEEP YOUR EYES PEELED. IF I'VE GUESSED RIGHT, WE SHOULD SOON SEE...AH, THERE THEY ARE!

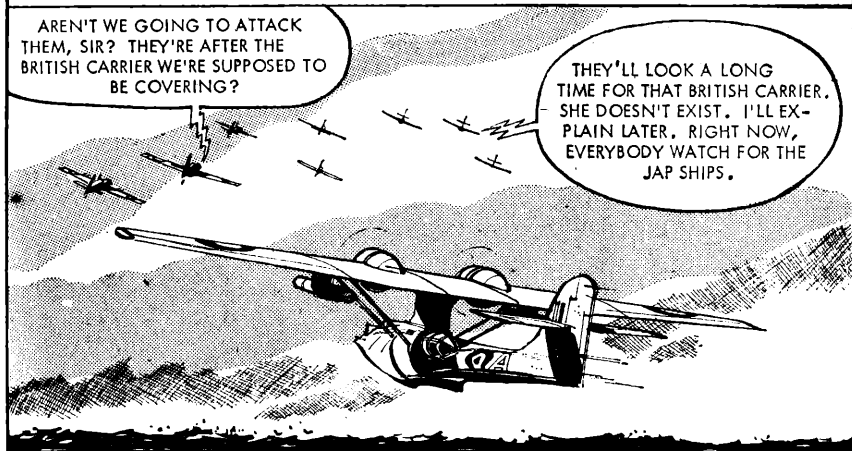
AWAY OUT TO SEA, HIGH IN THE BLUE VAULT OF THE SKY, LIKE SPECKS OF DUST OFF A WINDOW, A LARGE FORMATION OF JAP AIRCRAFT APPEARED. LAANDER GRINNED IN SATISFACTION.



LAANDER WATCHED THE FORMIDABLE JAP STRIKING FORCE OUT OF SIGHT, THEN SWUNG HIS NOSE IN THE DIRECTION FROM WHICH THE JAPANESE HAD COME.

AREN'T WE GOING TO ATTACK THEM, SIR? THEY'RE AFTER THE BRITISH CARRIER WE'RE SUPPOSED TO BE COVERING?

THEY'LL LOOK A LONG TIME FOR THAT BRITISH CARRIER. SHE DOESN'T EXIST. I'LL EXPLAIN LATER. RIGHT NOW, EVERYBODY WATCH FOR THE JAP SHIPS.



UTTERLY NONPLUSSED, GRAY FELL SILENT. AT LAANDER'S ORDER, THE FORMATION FANNED OUT TO SEARCH FOR THE JAP SHIPS. SOON ONE OF THE FRENCH SPOTTED THEM.

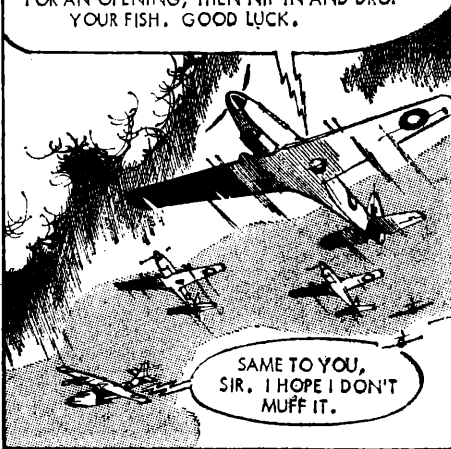
CALLING LEADER. ENEMY TO THE NORTH EAST.

GOOD WORK. DON'T GO ANY NEARER, WAIT UNTIL WE JOIN UP WITH YOU.



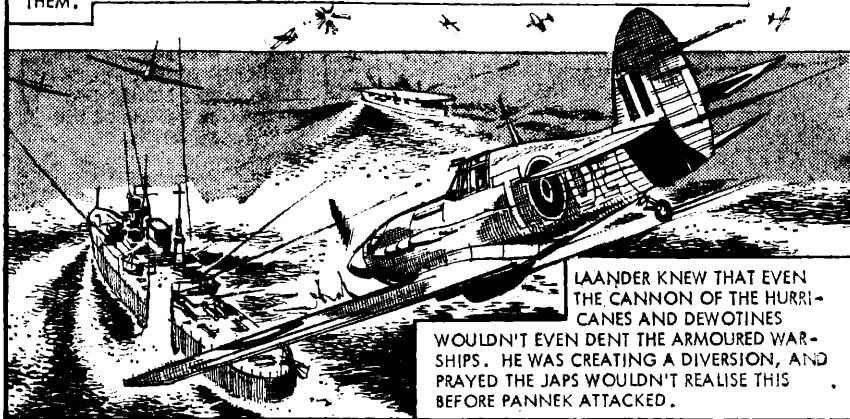
SWIFTLY THE LITTLE FORCE FORMED UP AGAIN AND LAANDER GAVE HIS FINAL INSTRUCTIONS — ESPECIALLY TO PANNEK IN THE CATALINA.

WE'LL WADE INTO THEM TO DRAW THEIR FIRE AND KEEP THEM LOOKING UP. WATCH FOR AN OPENING, THEN NIP IN AND DROP YOUR FISH. GOOD LUCK.



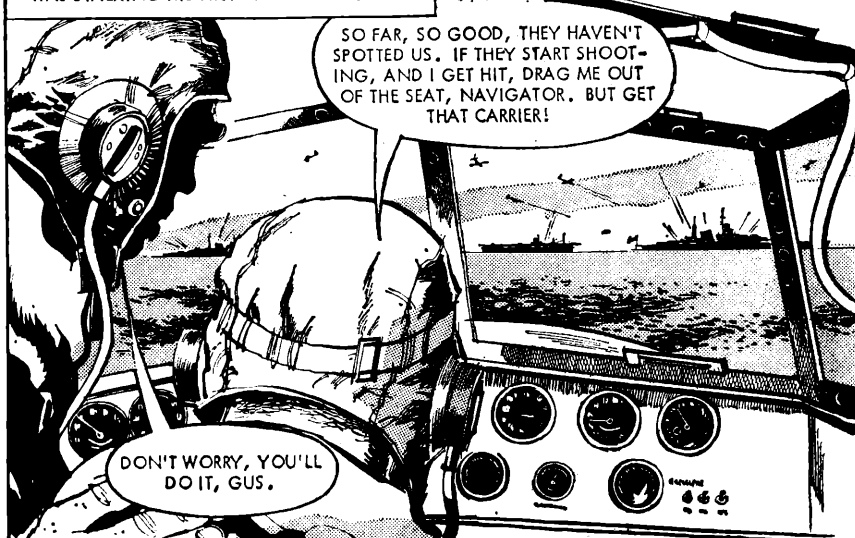
SAME TO YOU, SIR. I HOPE I DON'T MUFF IT.

LAANDER HAD GUESSED RIGHT, THE JAP NAVAL COMMANDER HAD SENT EVERY AVAILABLE AIRCRAFT IN HIS STRIKING FORCE AFTER THE MYTHICAL BRITISH CARRIER. NOW HIS SHIPS HAD TO RELY ON THEIR A.A. GUNS AS THE FIGHTERS SWOOPED ON THEM.



LAANDER KNEW THAT EVEN THE CANNON OF THE HURRICANES AND DEWOTINES WOULDN'T EVEN DENT THE ARMOURD WARSHIPS. HE WAS CREATING A DIVERSION, AND PRAYED THE JAPS WOULDN'T REALISE THIS BEFORE PANNEK ATTACKED.

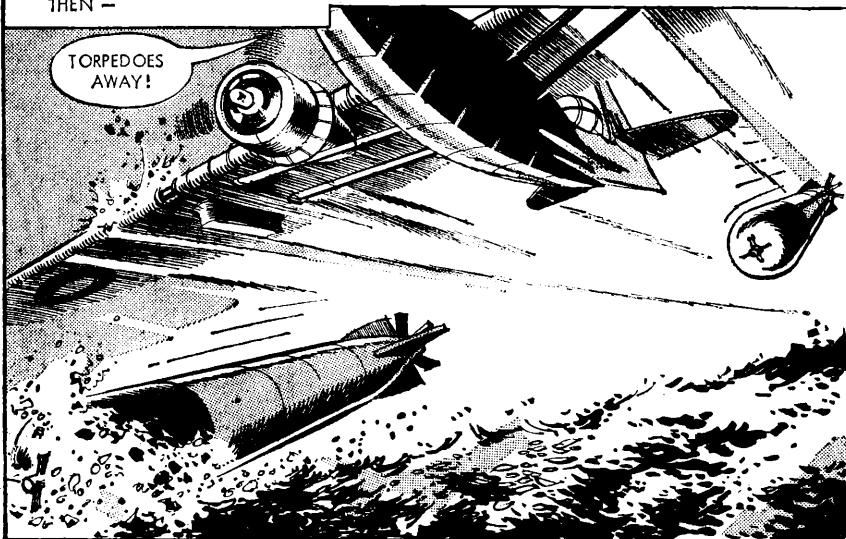
WHILE THE FIGHTERS WHIRLED ROUND THE IRONCLADS' LIKE ANGRY HORNETS, PANNEK WAS STALKING HIS PREY LIKE A TIGER.



GUS PANNEK WAS SWEATING BLOOD. THE CRUISERS HAD CLOSED IN TO PROTECT THE CARRIER WITH CROSS-FIRE. HIS AIM HAD TO BE SPOT ON TO GET HIS TORPEDOES PAST THE STERN OF THE NEARER CRUISER INTO THE CARRIER — PRIME TARGET.



GRITTING HIS TEETH, PANNEK HELD THE FLYING BOAT STEADY AS BULLETS AND SHELLS THUDDING INTO HER, LARGER AND LARGER GREW THE TOWERING BULK OF THE CARRIER, THEN —

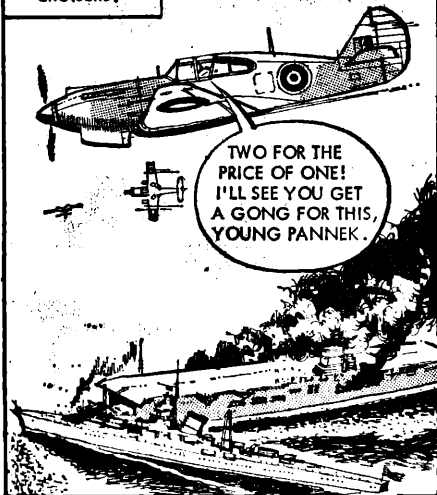


UP ABOVE, LAANDER WATCHED THE TWIN WHITE STREAKS THAT SHOWED THE PATH OF THE TORPEDOES TOWARDS THE CARRIER. FRANTICALLY THE LEVIATHAN TRIED TO AVOID THE MESSENGERS OF DEATH, BUT STRAIGHT AND TRUE THEY TORE THROUGH HER SIDE AND EXPLODED WITH DEVASTATING EFFECT.



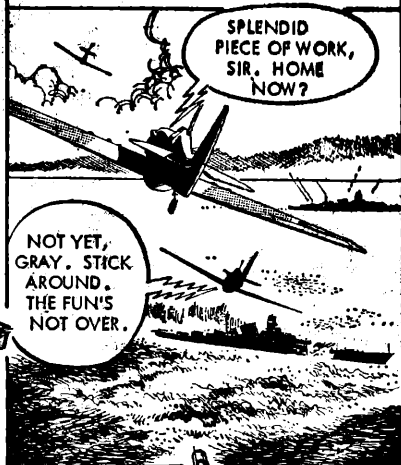


HER ENGINES AND STEERING WRECKED THE CARRIER VEERED WILDLY, AND TO LAANDER'S JOY, HER GREAT BOWS BIT INTO THE FLANK OF ONE OF THE CRUISERS.



TWO FOR THE PRICE OF ONE! I'LL SEE YOU GET A GONG FOR THIS, YOUNG PANNEK.

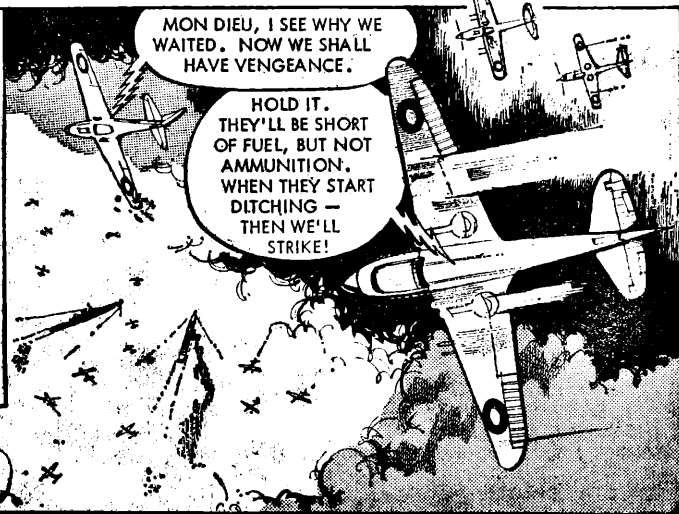
HER SIDE TORN OPEN, THE AIRCRAFT CARRIER HEELED FURTHER AND FURTHER AS THE HUNGRY SEA RUSHED IN. TEARING LOOSE FROM THE CRUISER, SHE TURNED TURTLE AND SANK. EVEN GRAY WAS IMPRESSED.



SPLENDID PIECE OF WORK, SIR. HOME NOW?

NOT YET, GRAY. STICK AROUND. THE FUN'S NOT OVER.

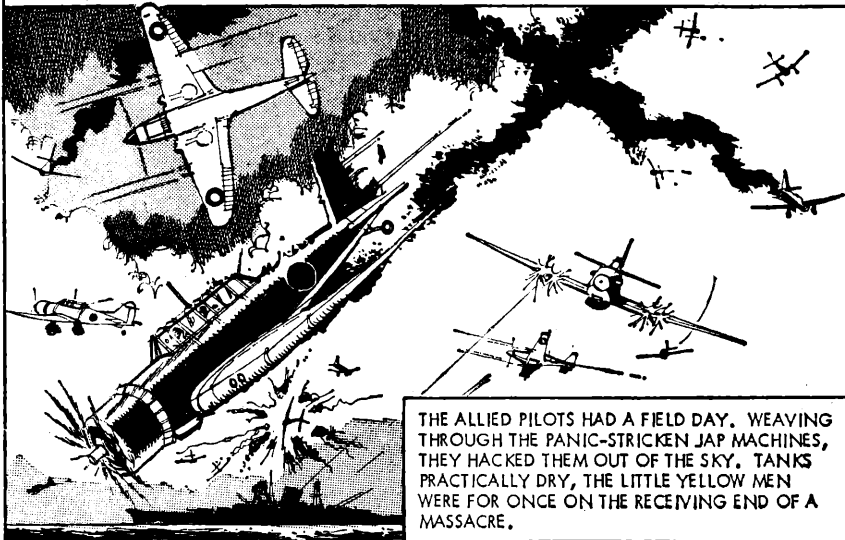
PANNEK, FLUSHED WITH VICTORY, HEADED FOR BASE. BUT LAANDER'S FIGHTERS WAITED. SOON THE JAP STRIKING FORCE RETURNED, TO FIND THEIR FLOATING AIRFIELD GONE TO THE BOTTOM OF THE ATLANTIC.



MON DIEU, I SEE WHY WE WAITED. NOW WE SHALL HAVE VENGEANCE.

HOLD IT. THEY'LL BE SHORT OF FUEL, BUT NOT AMMUNITION. WHEN THEY START DITCHING — THEN WE'LL STRIKE!

EVEN AS HE SPOKE, ONE ZERO'S ENGINE SHUDDERED TO A STOP AND IT FLOPPED HELPLESSLY INTO THE SEA. AT LAANDER'S YELL, HIS "UNITED NATIONS" FORCE STRUCK!



THE ALLIED PILOTS HAD A FIELD DAY. WEAVING THROUGH THE PANIC-STRICKEN JAP MACHINES, THEY HACKED THEM OUT OF THE SKY. TANKS PRACTICALLY DRY, THE LITTLE YELLOW MEN WERE FOR ONCE ON THE RECEIVING END OF A MASSACRE.

IN NO TIME NOT A SINGLE ENEMY AIRCRAFT WAS LEFT. THE MENACE TO THE SOUTH ATLANTIC HAD BEEN REMOVED, DRASTICALLY AND PERMANENTLY. BACK AT BASE —

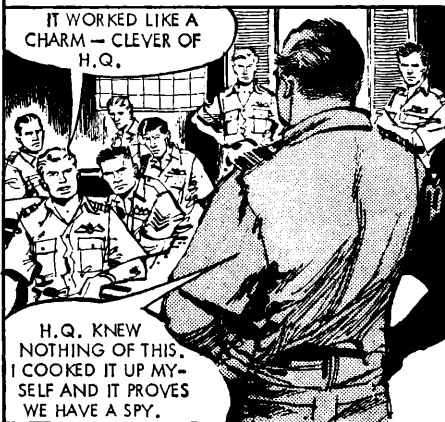
HARDLY SPORTING REALLY.



YES, BUT NOW WE'RE IN FOR SOME SERIOUS TALKING. I'VE CAUGHT MY BIG FISH, BUT NOT THE LITTLE ONE YET.

LAANDER EXPLAINED THAT THE STORY OF THE BRITISH CARRIER WAS A RUSE TO ENTICE THE JAPANESE NEAR THE COAST.

IT WORKED LIKE A CHARM — CLEVER OF H.Q.



H.Q. KNEW NOTHING OF THIS. I COOKED IT UP MYSELF AND IT PROVES WE HAVE A SPY.

IN A TRICE ALL THE ELATION OF VICTORY AND THE GOOD HUMOUR EVAPORATED. THE OLD TENSION AND MISTRUST CLAMPED RIGHT DOWN ON THEM AGAIN.



ALL THIS TIME, WALLY THE CHIMP HAD BEEN HANGING AROUND. DISAPPOINTED THAT NOBODY TOOK ANY NOTICE OF HIM, HE DECIDED A PRANK WAS CALLED FOR, AND SELECTED ROPER AS HIS VICTIM.



BOILING WITH RIGHTEOUS INDIGNATION, GRAY SPRANG TO HIS FEET.



ROPER MADE TO FOLLOW GRAY, BUT HIS FOOT, TIED BY WALLY TO THE LEG OF HIS CHAIR, TRIPPED HIM AND SENT HIM SPRAWLING. AS HE FELL, HIS SHIRT CAUGHT ON THE EDGE OF THE TABLE AND TORE OPEN.



WHILE ROPER, CURSING SAVAGELY, FREED HIS SHOE FROM THE CHAIR, LAUGHED THUMBED THROUGH THE SLIM BLACK VOLUME WHICH ALSO CONTAINED THE MAPS, AND LOOKED UP, HIS FACE LIKE THUNDER.

A BOOK OF CODES! WELL, WELL. HERE'S MY LITTLE FISH. GOOD OLD WALLY.

IT'S A TRICK. THAT BOOK WAS PLANTED ON HIM.

TAIN ROPER, ATTEMPTING TO UNDO THE PLAYED COMMITMENT TO A MATTER WHICH HE HAD TO HIS BELIEF

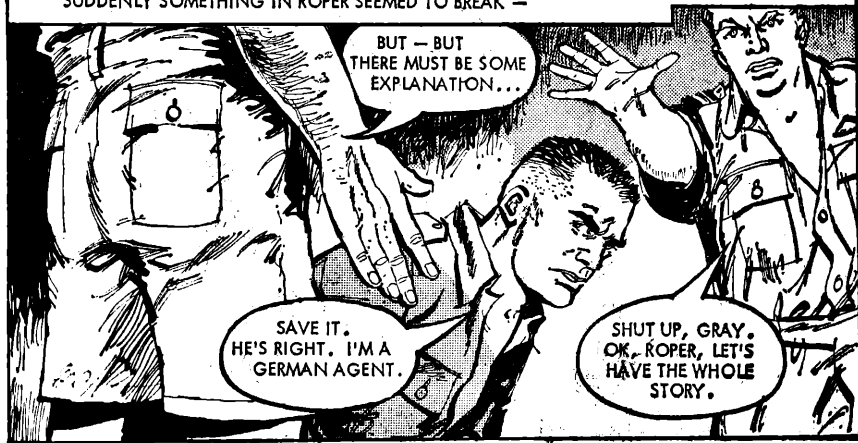


WALLY, TAKEN ABACK AT THE TURMOIL HIS JOKE HAD CAUSED AND FEARING PUNISHMENT, FLED, LEAVING THE HARD-FACED MEN TO THEIR ARGUMENTS. BUT SUDDENLY SOMETHING IN ROPER SEEMED TO BREAK —

BUT — BUT THERE MUST BE SOME EXPLANATION...

SAVE IT. HE'S RIGHT. I'M A GERMAN AGENT.

SHUT UP, GRAY. OK, ROPER, LET'S HAVE THE WHOLE STORY.



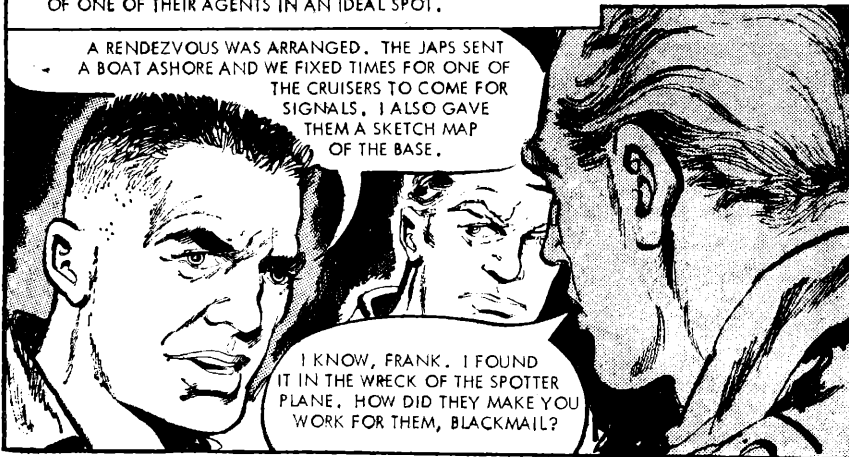
ROPER EXPLAINED THAT HE WAS A VERY MINOR SPY, A COLLECTOR OF INFORMATION, PASSING IT ON THROUGH CODED LETTERS TO INNOCENT-LOOKING ADDRESSES IN ENGLAND.



IT'S ALL IN THERE, CERTAIN PHRASES FOR CERTAIN ITEMS. I COULD USE THE FORCES AIR MAIL, SO THE STUFF GOT THROUGH QUITE QUICKLY.

THEN HOW DID YOU GET YOURSELF SENT HERE?

THAT HAD BEEN A STROKE OF PURE LUCK. HE HAD INFORMED HIS NAZI MASTERS OF HIS POSTING, AND THEY IN TURN TOLD THE JAPANESE COMMANDER OF THE PRESENCE OF ONE OF THEIR AGENTS IN AN IDEAL SPOT.



A RENDEZVOUS WAS ARRANGED. THE JAPS SENT A BOAT ASHORE AND WE FIXED TIMES FOR ONE OF THE CRUISERS TO COME FOR SIGNALS. I ALSO GAVE THEM A SKETCH MAP OF THE BASE.

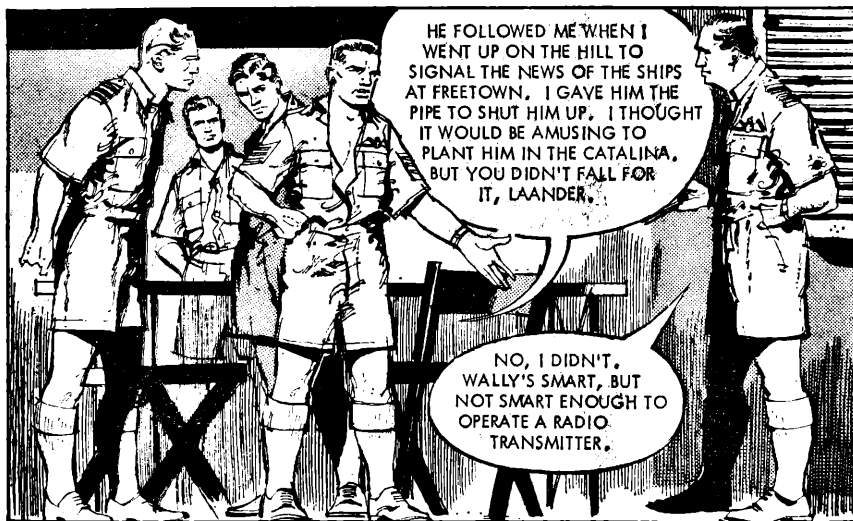
I KNOW, FRANK. I FOUND IT IN THE WRECK OF THE SPOTTER PLANE. HOW DID THEY MAKE YOU WORK FOR THEM, BLACKMAIL?



TO GRAY'S AMAZEMENT, FRANK ROPER TURNED A LOOK OF UTTER CONFUSION.

FAITHFUL TO THE  
LAST, AREN'T YOU?  
YOU STUPID, POMPOUS  
OAF! YOU WERE THE  
BEST COVER I EVER HAD,  
WITH YOUR "ENGLAND  
FOR EVER" WAYS. I  
DID IT OF MY OWN  
FREE WILL, FOR  
ONE THING —  
MONEY!

WELL, GRAY, THERE'S  
AN ENIGMATIC FELLOW  
WHO CALLED HIMSELF  
THAN A SHIP'S BILLY.  
HOW DOES WALLY FIT  
IN, ROPER?



HE FOLLOWED ME WHEN I  
WENT UP ON THE HILL TO  
SIGNAL THE NEWS OF THE SHIPS  
AT FREETOWN. I GAVE HIM THE  
PIPE TO SHUT HIM UP. I THOUGHT  
IT WOULD BE AMUSING TO  
PLANT HIM IN THE CATALINA,  
BUT YOU DIDN'T FALL FOR  
IT, LAANDER.

NO, I DIDN'T.  
WALLY'S SMART, BUT  
NOT SMART ENOUGH TO  
OPERATE A RADIO  
TRANSMITTER.

THE ARRIVAL OF THE FRENCH HAD BEEN A GODSEND. ROPER HAD NURTURED GRAY'S DISTRUST OF FOREIGNERS, TO DIVERT SUSPICION FROM HIMSELF.

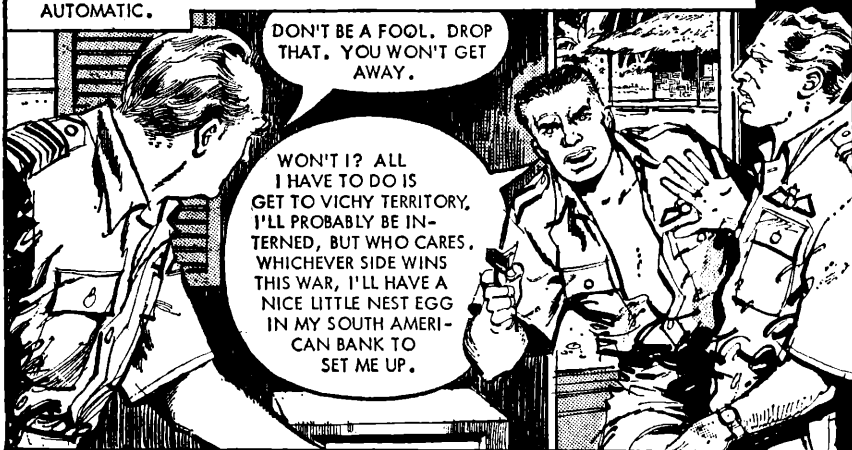
THE SILLY FOOL LAPPED IT UP. I TOLD THE JAPS TO AVOID HITTING THE DEWOTINES TOO MUCH IF THEY COULD. BY A STROKE OF LUCK, THAT'S HOW IT TURNED OUT. AND THAT SET GRAY HERE OFF GOOD AND PROPER.

I'VE MET SOME SCUM IN MY TIME, ROPER, BUT YOU TAKE THE BISCUIT. ALL RIGHT, TAKE HIM TO THE LOCK-UP.

WHILE THEY TALKED, ROPER HAD BEEN UNOBTUSIVELY SLIDING HIS HAND INSIDE HIS SHIRT. NOW HE WHIPPED IT OUT, HOLDING A WICKED LITTLE SNUB-NOSED AUTOMATIC.

DON'T BE A FOOL. DROP THAT. YOU WON'T GET AWAY.

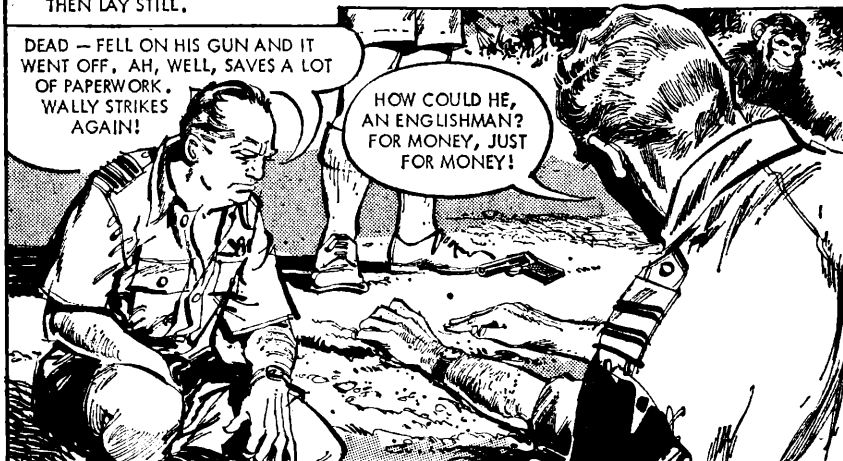
WON'T I? ALL I HAVE TO DO IS GET TO VICHY TERRITORY. I'LL PROBABLY BE INTERNED, BUT WHO CARES. WHICHEVER SIDE WINS THIS WAR, I'LL HAVE A NICE LITTLE NEST EGG IN MY SOUTH AMERICAN BANK TO SET ME UP.



THE SPY DARTED OUT, TURNING THE LOCK BEHIND HIM. WITH A ROAR, LAANDER HURLED HIMSELF AT THE DOOR, SPLINTERING THE FLIMSY PANELLING. THEY SAW ROPER SPRINTING FOR THE AIRCRAFT. THEN A SHAMBLING FIGURE APPEARED, ARMS OUT-STRETCHED.



AS ROPER THUDD TO THE GROUND THERE WAS A SHARP REPORT. HE TWITCHED TWICE, THEN LAY STILL.



THE YOUNG PILOT'S CAREFULLY CONSTRUCTED LITTLE WORLD LAY IN RUINS AT HIS FEET. FOR DAYS HE SPOKE TO NO ONE, KEPT TO HIS ROOM. THEN LAANDER SOUGHT HIM OUT.

LEAVE ME ALONE, IF YOU DON'T MIND, SIR.

YOU CAN'T MOPE AROUND ALL YOUR LIFE. READ THIS, IT WILL CHEER YOU UP, SQUADRON LEADER GRAY.

JOLTED OUT OF HIS LETHARGY, GRAY SNATCHED THE SLIP OF PAPER. HE WAS INDEED PROMOTED TO SQUADRON LEADER, AND ORDERED TO ALEXANDRIA TO FORM A NEW SQUADRON.

I...I DON'T KNOW WHAT TO SAY. I OWE YOU ALL, SOUTH AFRICANS AND FRENCHMEN, MY HUMBLEST APOLOGIES FOR THE WAY I'VE BEHAVED. CAN YOU FORGIVE ME, SIR?

WE ALREADY DID, DAYS AGO. BUT YOU'VE BEEN HIDING YOURSELF SO MUCH WE COULDN'T TELL YOU. COME ON, THIS CALLS FOR A CELEBRATION.

THE PARTY WAS A ROARING SUCCESS. GRAY HAD LEARNED THAT A MAN DOES NOT HAVE TO BE ENGLISH TO BE A STAUNCH COMRADE IN ARMS AND A TRUE FRIEND. HE TURNED TO THE FOUR FRENCH PILOTS.

IF I'M TO FORM A SQUADRON, I'LL NEED PILOTS, GOOD PILOTS. WOULD YOU GENTLEMEN DO ME THE HONOUR OF FLYING WITH ME?

WITH THE GREATEST OF PLEASURE, M'SIEUR. A TOAST TO OUR NEW INTERNATIONAL SQUADRON.

IN HIS NEW UNIT MARTIN GRAY HAD MEN FROM NEARLY EVERY COUNTRY IN EUROPE AND FROM THE DOMINIONS. AND "GRAY'S GANG" WAS TO BECOME THE CRACK FIGHTER SQUADRON OF THE DESERT AIR FORCE.

**Commando**  
**THE END**

# YOUR NEXT COMMANDOS



## **"SPACE PILOT"**

### **Commando No. 217**

**HIS** Spitfire was so full of holes it looked like a sieve — but still he managed to keep it in the air and shoot down Jerries.

He became a legend even amongst the Battle of Britain aces. But then they started wondering at his fantastic luck. But was it pure chance or was some hidden power at work ....?

Both on sale in two weeks — 1/- each

## **"GLIDER STRIKE" — Commando No. 218**

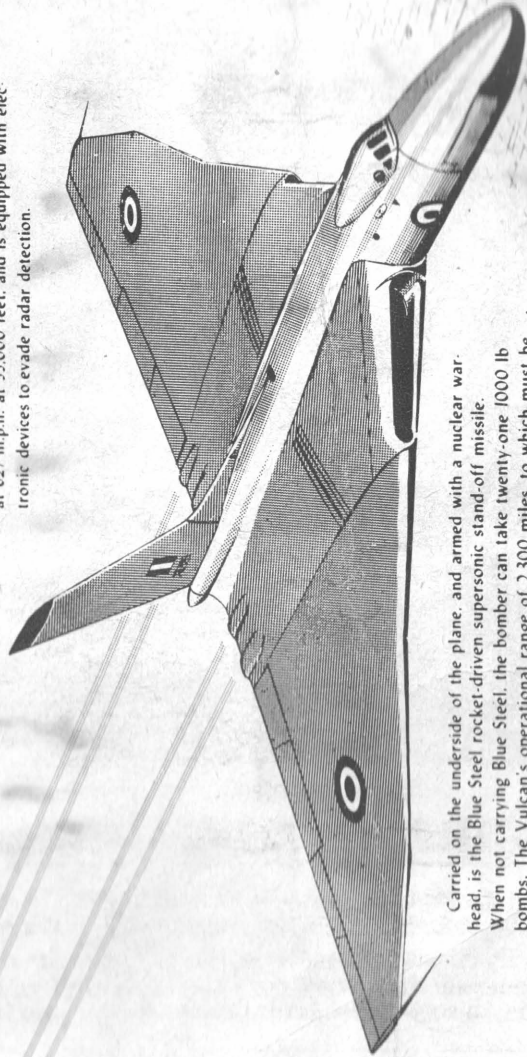
**L**IKE giant bats the great gliders swept silently in to land. Inside, bracing themselves for the impact, tough, battle-tested paratroopers.

Every man was trained to perfection, every man could be relied on under any circumstances. Every man, that is, except sergeant-pilot "Dodger" Maynard — but he's the fellow who makes this pic-story a real thriller.

# STRIKE POWER

## The HAWKER SIDDELEY VULCAN

**T**HE Hawker Siddeley Vulcan is the R.A.F.'s main long range medium bomber. A magnificent-looking giant, it has been in service some time, yet keeps its ultra-sleek, deadly appearance even when compared with the most advanced of today's bombers. The Vulcan cruises at 627 m.p.h. at 55,000 feet, and is equipped with electronic devices to evade radar detection.



Carried on the underside of the plane, and armed with a nuclear warhead, is the Blue Steel rocket-driven supersonic stand-off missile. When not carrying Blue Steel, the bomber can take twenty-one 1000 lb bombs. The Vulcan's operational range of 2,300 miles, to which must be added the still top-secret range of the missile, poses a tricky defence problem for any country unlucky enough to be up against it.



# INTERNATIONAL SQUADRON

**S**OUTH AFRICANS in Catalinas, French in Dewotine fighters, British in Hurricanes; what an exciting bunch they were!

They fought among themselves, they scrapped against the Japs—and to crown it all, they'd a German saboteur and spy in their midst creating more havoc

